
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY: LESSONS FROM THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT



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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Summit meetings between the United States and the Soviet Union, always headline news, have become media events on a grand scale. Both sides seek to influence the way the world views their leaders, the conduct of the meetings, the relationship between the superpowers, and the policy outcomes. Indeed, how summits are perceived fundamentally shapes these outcomes and becomes a substantive part of the process.

The members of this Commission believe that public diplomacy should be treated as a strategic part of summit statecraft. It is, after all, the public component that makes summits unique and distinguishes them from other forms of diplomatic dialogue.

In preparing for summits, American policymakers pay a great deal of attention to protocol and policy issues. Despite increased awareness of the value of public diplomacy, it is still seen too often only as press relations. Concern about public perceptions, especially foreign public perceptions, becomes merely another routine planning item similar to budgets, logistics, and security.

Image is not more important than policy. But when image significantly affects the substance of policy, it must be given a higher priority than policymakers have given to it in the past.

Public diplomacy supplements and reinforces traditional diplomacy through the explanation and advocacy of U.S. policies abroad. It provides foreign audiences with information about American society and culture, enables many to experience the diversity of our country through international educational exchanges, and offers assessments of foreign public opinion to U.S. policymakers.

In this report, my colleagues and I have emphasized the strategic importance of public diplomacy to America's global interests, the essential role played by the United States Information Agency in carrying out this nation's summit diplomacy, and the need to include its communications professionals early and regularly in the policy process.



Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.
Chairman

March, 1988

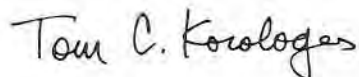
TO THE CONGRESS AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

In accordance with the United States Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948, as amended, the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy submits herewith a report on "Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Washington Summit."

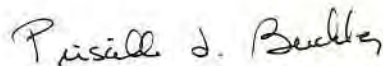
Respectfully submitted,



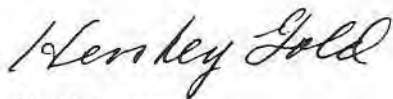
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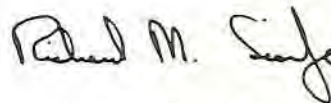
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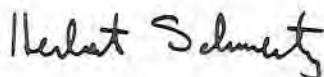
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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Public diplomacy should be treated as a primary strategic element in summit planning. It is the public attention given to summit meetings that makes them unique and distinguishes them from other forms of diplomatic dialogue.
- A comprehensive and coordinated public diplomacy strategy for the Moscow summit should be developed at the highest levels of the White House, the Department of State, and the U.S. Information Agency. The Special Planning Group (SPG), established by President Reagan in National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 77, should be convened at an early date by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs to consider such a strategy and its implementation through the SPG's International Information Committee (IIC).
- Key elements in a summit public diplomacy strategy should include early guidance on U.S. policy goals; early decisions on summit themes; analysis of the anticipated public opinion impact of proposed U.S. policies; assessment of potential public affairs strategies of other nations and responses to them; reports on foreign public opinion and media trends; close cooperation between policy-makers and the public diplomacy community; and a well-conceived plan of public affairs activities focused on foreign media and opinion elites.
- Senior USIA officers should be assigned to the White House and all interagency planning groups to participate in the summit planning process.
- President Reagan's appearance on Soviet television immediately prior to the next summit should be a major public diplomacy goal.
- The United States should insist that the Soviets provide press treatment and access at the Moscow summit comparable to that extended by the U.S. at the Washington summit. This should be covered in a written understanding with the Soviets prior to the summit.
- Equal access for foreign and domestic media should be pursued in pre-summit negotiations with the host country for all summits taking place overseas, and combined press centers should be the norm in all future summits in the United States.
- U.S. spokespersons and senior officials should go to Moscow before the principals arrive to provide background information on the U.S. agenda and goals for the gathering world press.
- U.S. officials and other experts should participate in post-summit briefings and other public diplomacy programs overseas.
- Analyses of foreign elite, media, and public attitudes on summit issues should be fully considered in the National Security Decision Directives that establish U.S. summit goals.
- The United States should undertake more systematic evaluation of the Soviet Union's public diplomacy to provide as full a picture of its impact as we have of Soviet military, economic, and diplomatic activities.
- Regional pre-summit meetings of senior policymakers and USIA's Public Affairs Officers can contribute significantly to public diplomacy planning and programming.

FINDINGS:

- In addition to President Reagan's skillful public diplomacy at the U.S.-Soviet summit in Washington, the United States Information Agency contributed a great deal to its success. Lessons from the Washington summit can serve U.S. interests well.
- Favorable disposition of overseas audiences towards U.S. positions is important to the success of a Moscow summit and may be more difficult to achieve with the summit taking place outside of the United States.
- USIA began public diplomacy planning for an INF agreement and a possible summit in Washington more than six months before the event. Although USIA received positive responses to its thematic and public affairs proposals, their quality and authoritativeness would have been enhanced by earlier policy guidance from the White House and the Department of State.
- The Washington summit would have benefited from an early public diplomacy planning meeting involving senior officials from the White House, the National Security Council, the Department of State, USIA, the Department of Defense and other agencies.
- Effective summit public diplomacy involves effort over an extended period of time and requires interagency coordination well before the summit becomes a certainty and its agenda is set.
- Briefings of USIA's Public Affairs Officers in Geneva by principal U.S. arms control negotiators prior to the Washington summit significantly helped USIA's posts contribute to a favorable climate in Europe for the INF Treaty.
- President Reagan's broadcasts on the Voice of America and Worldnet prior to the Washington summit and Secretary Shultz's interviews at USIA's Foreign Press Center were notable examples of successful high level participation in summit public diplomacy.
- The combined foreign and domestic press center, recommended by USIA and agreed to by the White House and the State Department, contributed to positive foreign press coverage at the Washington summit.

INTRODUCTION

The proposal for a superpower summit in Washington first surfaced during the Geneva meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in November, 1985. Preparations for their historic December, 1987 summit in the nation's capital, however, were hampered until almost the last minute by uncertainty as to if and when it would take place.¹ Despite this, the Washington summit is widely perceived to have been a success for President Reagan and American foreign policy.

Much of the credit for this success must go to President Reagan himself. Much, too, must go to the skillful planning of public diplomacy professionals in the U.S. Information Agency and elsewhere. Early on, senior diplomats in USIA understood that acceptance of the INF Treaty by the Western Alliance hinged not only on the terms of the agreement, but on public perceptions of it.

On the one hand, the world could perceive the INF agreement for what it is: a successful accomplishment by the President and NATO stemming from President Reagan's offer to the Soviets in 1981 to cancel deployment of Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles in return for a Soviet commitment to dismantle its SS-20 missiles. The agreement could be seen as testimony to the recent strengthening of U.S. military capability and as a triumph of allied steadfastness in the face of intense domestic and Soviet-directed pressure in the five West European basing countries.

Alternatively, the INF agreement could be perceived as signifying a change in the climate of East-West relations in which the U.S. would let its guard down—a first step in the U.S. withdrawal of troops and commitment from Europe. Our allies could forget that President Reagan had proposed the "Zero-Zero" formula and see the agreement largely as the product of the new Soviet leader's quest for peace.

Either scenario was imaginable, irrespective of the language of the treaty. Whichever outcome prevailed would result not from the INF Treaty itself, but from the degree of skill employed in laying the groundwork with friendly nations for the negotiations taking place in Geneva and later in explaining and defending the results of those negotiations.

The public diplomacy challenge then was to develop widespread public understanding of a prospective INF agreement that would:

- Strengthen U.S. negotiations prior to the summit.
- Make clear that the INF agreement is consistent with NATO's overall strategy of flexible response and a logical consequence of allied reactions to the threat posed by Soviet installation of SS-20s in the late 1970s.
- Reassure Europeans of continued U.S. commitment to NATO and the defense of Western Europe.
- Convey lessons of strength for future U.S. dealings with the Soviet Union, and

- Draw foreign media attention to other important summit agenda items such as Afghanistan and human rights.

The public diplomacy challenge was heightened by the intense media focus that would be inevitable at a Washington summit.

Because public perceptions significantly affect policies, this Commission believes it is imperative that public diplomacy be treated as a primary strategic element in summit planning.

In this report, we will focus on the strategic importance of communicating U.S. summit objectives to foreign audiences. We will stress also the need early in the planning process to develop a comprehensive summit public diplomacy strategy at the highest levels in the White House, the Department of State, the U.S. Information Agency, and other civilian and military agencies of the United States. We will seek to draw lessons from the Washington summit and suggest ways they can serve U.S. interests and contribute to future summits.

PREPARING FOR THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT

Well before a White House team was created to deal with the December, 1987 U.S.-Soviet summit, public affairs strategists and research analysts at the U.S. Information Agency had begun to lay the groundwork for a summit public diplomacy strategy. Anticipating possible summit dates and taking into account the Agency's assessments of public opinion in Western Europe and elsewhere, senior USIA officers began in April, 1987 to plan public diplomacy support for an INF agreement and a possible meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev in Washington.

These efforts led to an infusion of INF-related materials into the flow of communications between USIA's headquarters in Washington and the Agency's posts around the world. A system of reporting and shared information was established that resulted, not in a grand strategic plan for worldwide or even regional application, but in diverse public diplomacy plans—tailored by USIA's Public Affairs Officers to the unique situation in each host country—to be implemented during the summer and fall of 1987.

The thematic proposals, public opinion analyses, and proposed calendar of public affairs activities that resulted from these efforts became the blueprint for the public diplomacy approach that was eventually adopted by the National Security Council and the President. Had USIA delayed until the summit was formally announced, its proposals would have arrived on the desk of NSC planners too late.

That USIA took the initiative in defining summit public affairs objectives and proposals is itself unremarkable. In doing so, the Agency was performing its traditional function of advising on the impact of U.S. policies on foreign public opinion and on ways to explain and advo-

¹The Washington summit was announced less than seven weeks before it was scheduled to convene. This led to logistical problems that were largely overcome, including last minute difficulty in reserving a suitable media center.

cate those policies abroad.⁴ USIA's task was made difficult, however, by the absence of early interagency coordination of summit themes and the absence of an overall U.S. government public diplomacy strategy for the summit. This required the Agency to anticipate U.S. priorities during a period when public diplomacy planning at the White House and the Department of State failed to keep pace with the process of developing a summit agenda.

Planning within USIA for a major foreign policy initiative such as the Washington summit should be part of a larger public diplomacy strategy that includes a statement of U.S. policy goals and the means to achieve them. In the case of the Washington summit, the statement would have addressed separately the arms control, human rights, and bilateral and regional issues that comprised the U.S. summit agenda.

Ideally the NSC, after consultation with USIA and other civilian and military agencies involved in summit planning, ought to issue *well in advance of any summit* a National Security Decision Directive containing the goals and themes that will guide U.S. public diplomacy and most effectively promote U.S. policy objectives abroad. This NSDD should draw upon the foreign public opinion research capabilities of USIA and the knowledge its seasoned officers have of foreign media and cultures, as well as the attitudes of foreign opinion-makers.

Key elements in a summit public diplomacy strategy include early guidance on U.S. policy goals; early decisions on summit themes; analysis of the anticipated impact of U.S. positions on foreign public opinion; assessment of the goals and public affairs tactics of other summit participants, as well as appropriate responses to them; and analysis of foreign public opinion and media trends, among our adversaries and our friends. A well-conceived plan of public affairs activities, taking into account their substantive and symbolic aspects, should then be developed consonant with the strategy. Close cooperation between policymakers and the public diplomacy community is essential, and the plan should undergo review, criticism, and revision to ensure continued relevance to summit goals and objectives.

Earlier development of summit strategy and themes makes it more likely that senior officials communicate with one voice on central issues and overcome a natural hesitation to speak publicly in the absence of firm policy. The result would be more informative, authoritative, and consistent presentations of U.S. views.

In the case of the Washington summit, a public diplomacy strategy would have required planning well in advance and against the contingency that a summit might not take place. Even if the summit had not occurred, interagency coordination and the dissemination of information demonstrating U.S. commitment to the defense of Europe and the "Zero-Zero" proposal would have served a useful purpose. A well-conceived public diplomacy strategy cannot be planned and executed in a matter of days or weeks if it is to achieve results. There

are good bargaining reasons why summits involving a treaty under negotiation cannot be scheduled to permit the months of advance planning that public diplomacy on a major scale requires. This suggests that a substantial part of summit public diplomacy planning—that which can be done without drawing public attention to it—ought to be undertaken quietly in anticipation of the announcement of summit dates.

INF: THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHALLENGE

The framework for the eventual agreement to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear (INF) weapons in Europe was advanced by President Reagan in 1981 in his "Zero-Zero" offer to the Soviets. The danger from a public diplomacy standpoint, as an INF agreement with the Soviets became more imminent, was that America's NATO allies would see it, not as a logical development from President Reagan's "Zero-Zero" proposal and synchronized allied responses to Soviet deployment of the first SS-20s in the 1970s, but as evidence of intent to withdraw American troops and reduce the U.S. commitment to Western Europe. The public diplomacy challenge prior to the summit was to ensure that U.S. positions on summit issues were understood and supported by our allies, both on their own merits and to strengthen the U.S. bargaining position at the summit.

The obstacles to meeting this challenge were considerable. Public opinion polls conducted by USIA in West Germany, the United Kingdom, and France immediately after the Reykjavik summit and in May, 1987 showed that large numbers of Europeans believed:

- The Soviet Union was making a greater contribution than the U.S. toward reaching a nuclear arms control agreement,
- The "Zero-Zero" offer had been proposed by General Secretary Gorbachev, and
- The U.S. was less likely to adhere to arms control treaties than the Soviets.

Skepticism regarding the President's ability to execute an arms control agreement with the Soviets was widespread as well.⁵ In April, 1987 USIA advised the NSC and the Department of State of the adverse public opinion in Western Europe and sought backing for a two-track public diplomacy approach to be developed through an interagency working group. The Agency sought (1) to ensure public support abroad for an INF agreement negotiated from a position of strength and solidarity within NATO and (2) to maintain support for U.S. positions should the INF talks break down.

This two-track approach became the basis for U.S. efforts to communicate with European audiences. USIA was encouraged to develop its planning through the NSC-chaired Interagency Group for Arms Control and SDI Public Diplomacy. USIA directed its attention primarily at the five INF basing countries in Europe plus France, with

⁴ "The Director of the United States Information Agency shall be principal advisor to the President, the Secretary of State, and the NSC on international informational, educational, and cultural matters." National Security Decision Directive 266, March 31, 1987.

⁵ Michael R. Gordon, "Soviets Lead U.S. in Arms Cut Image," *New York Times*, June 6, 1987.

selective focus on some non-basing countries as well. The Agency's Public Affairs Officers were instructed to conduct programs in anticipation that the INF negotiations would bear fruit, yet be cautious not to raise hopes unduly should the talks hit a snag or collapse.

USIA brought senior Washington staff and a dozen of its Western European Public Affairs Officers to Geneva in June for a series of workshops on arms control issues. They were briefed by Ambassadors Maynard Glitman (INF), Ronald Lehman (START), Henry Cooper (Nuclear and Space Talks), and Stephen Ledogar (Conventional Forces). This brought the Agency's officers up-to-date on substantive issues and led to development of country-specific action plans. The plans contained requests for President Reagan's involvement in the public diplomacy effort and appearances (live or televised via satellite) by prominent arms control negotiators and other senior U.S. arms control officials.

President Reagan's speech at the Venice economic summit in June made an important contribution to U.S. efforts to show support for its North Atlantic defense partners irrespective of the success or failure of the INF negotiations. In Washington, President Reagan's broadcasts on the Voice of America and Worldnet, USIA's satellite television network, and Secretary of State George Shultz's interviews at USIA's Foreign Press Center were notable examples of successful high level official participation in summit public diplomacy. Effective Worldnet programs featuring Ambassadors Max Kampelman, Assistant Secretary of State Rozanne Ridgway, and Ambassador Paul Nitze capitalized on heightened media and public interest in Europe.

U.S. public diplomacy programs had a positive impact during the summer and fall of 1987. While cause and effect is difficult to determine, USIA's polls showed that Western European opinion became more favorably disposed to the U.S. position during the INF talks and to the agreement reached in Geneva. Feedback from U.S. missions overseas makes clear that President Reagan, through his speech at the economic summit, his interviews with European journalists, and his appearance on European television delivered persuasive reassurance of America's commitment to Western European security.

USIA's country-specific plans were useful in fulfilling public affairs objectives agreed to at the PAO conference in Geneva and in keeping U.S. government officials mindful of public diplomacy concerns throughout the pre-summit period. All of this supports the Commission's view that participation by U.S. policymakers in communicating to foreign audiences not only heightens the impact of what is being communicated, but also increases the awareness of policymakers to the importance of public diplomacy.

In assessing the interagency cooperation that occurred once a Washington summit appeared imminent, the Commission proceeds from the conviction that super-

power summits benefit immeasurably from early strategic planning sessions attended by representatives of USIA and the relevant civilian and military policymaking agencies.⁴ The International Information Committee, a standing committee of the NSC's Special Planning Group chaired by a senior representative of USIA, is an appropriate forum for such planning.

Foreign attitudes directly affect America's ability to achieve its national security goals and indeed become a substantive part of the policy process. Summit strategy coordinators at the highest levels should insist that USIA occupy a place at the summit planning table. At times during preparations for the Washington summit, USIA attended and participated actively in planning sessions; at times, for lack of invitation, it was absent. The Commission believes that in planning for future summits the United States should:

- Assume that public diplomacy is a primary strategic consideration;
- Include USIA at the planning table on all occasions when the communication of U.S. positions to foreign audiences or understanding of foreign public opinion is germane to treatment of the summit issues; and
- Develop a summit public diplomacy action plan, based on timely policy and thematic guidance, for circulation to all U.S. agencies involved with summit issues.

These objectives would be well-served by the assignment of senior USIA officers to the White House staff to participate in the summit planning process. Preparations for the 1985 Geneva summit were greatly facilitated by such assignments. USIA's officers bring a wealth of public diplomacy experience to the planning process. They can provide, as circumstances demand, full attention to summit-related issues and informed judgment at the point where policy guidance, the assessment of foreign attitudes and media trends, and public diplomacy programming converge. Based in the White House, these officers would operate as public diplomacy advisors within the "policy loop." Their input could be offered before, not after, issues are discussed and settled.

The Commission finds that interagency public diplomacy planning prior to the Washington summit was generally strong, but fell short of this "best case" scenario. The Commission is mindful, however, of the difficulties in dealing with sensitive subjects and time-critical materials by government organizations geographically and bureaucratically separated.

Rather than articulating a strategy at the outset, the White House, in the final stages of summit planning, approved those public diplomacy preparations for the Washington summit that had already been made.

From a programming standpoint, however, public diplomacy was indeed considered as an activity that should involve the President, Cabinet officials, arms negotiators, and other policymakers. The result was an impressive number of byliners, live and written interviews

⁴This view is also the valid premise of National Security Decision Directive 77 signed by President Reagan in 1983. The Directive established a Special Planning Group (SPG) to strengthen the organization, planning and coordination of public diplomacy activities. Chaired by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, its members consist of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of USIA, the Director of the Agency for International Development, and the Assistant to the President for Communications. Roundly endorsed in theory within the U.S. foreign policy community, the SPG regrettably has been much neglected in practice.

with European print and electronic journalists, Worldnet television and Foreign Press Center appearances, and on-the-record briefings.

The "full court press" public diplomacy offensive that occurred during the weeks immediately before the Washington summit will be difficult to duplicate outside the United States. For this reason, it is even more important that communication of American policies to foreign audiences be carried out in keeping with a public diplomacy strategy developed well before the summit itself. In future summits, the cooperation of senior U.S. officials with other claims on their time will be no less essential than during the Washington summit. If public diplomacy is treated as a truly strategic consideration, their participation will be more likely.

MEDIA SUPPORT AT THE WASHINGTON SUMMIT

The Washington summit was as much a worldwide media event as it was a bilateral encounter between two governments. U.S. officials faced a monumental task in staging on short notice a summit that drew close to 7,000 accredited journalists (3,000 representing foreign media) to the press center.

Providing credentials for journalists, photographers, and camera crews—no easy task to begin with—was complicated because meetings of the two leaders took place only at the White House with its strict security requirements.

Identifying a suitable venue for a press center—the nerve center for communicating to the world about the summit—was especially difficult. It soon became evident there was no single well-located site in Washington that could be pressed easily into service as a media center for a superpower summit. All available choices, including the Marriott Hotel which was eventually selected for its central location and the cooperation it provided on short notice, represented a compromise.

When space and facilities are in short supply, competition for access favors the influential media. And when competition between domestic and foreign media organizations takes place in the United States, the cards are stacked in favor of American publications and television networks. Recognizing a certain inevitability to this, the Commission was pleased with the decision to combine the domestic and foreign press centers in a single location and to standardize the treatment accorded to all properly credentialed journalists.

This is a point of more than passing interest. The combined foreign and domestic press center, recommended by USIA and agreed to by the White House and Department of State, resulted in the type of positive foreign press coverage that well-briefed journalists can provide. It cannot be proved that the generally favorable worldwide media treatment given to the U.S. at the Washington summit was due to the personal satisfaction felt by

foreign media correspondents. The Commission is convinced, however, that failure to provide adequate briefings, transmission facilities, and other amenities to the foreign press would lead, as it has in the past, to criticism and reporting adverse to the host country's interests.

The unified press center was beneficial in other respects. Placing foreign and domestic correspondents on an equal footing with the White House press corps eliminated unnecessary duplication and costs, and strengthened available services with no loss of prestige for White House correspondents. The co-location of facilities assured close cooperation between the White House and State Department press units and USIA, as well as the simultaneous early distribution of official statements to all media.

Those responsible for preparing materials for use at the Washington summit press center received high praise. By all accounts, the materials and information provided to foreign journalists, plus the well-organized, formal press briefings, enhanced foreign coverage and global impact with no loss of focus. The center was sensitive to the needs of journalists meeting deadlines around the clock.

A unified press center presents administrative concerns that must be addressed well in advance of any summit. The White House and the State Department have primary responsibility for dealing with U.S. media, and USIA, the foreign media. This division of responsibility necessitates prior agreement on equitable cost sharing and recognition that USIA is forbidden by law from disseminating its program materials to the American people.

Combined press centers providing equivalent treatment for all journalists should be the norm at future summits in the United States. The Commission recommends equal access for foreign and domestic media be pursued in pre-summit negotiations with the host country for all summits taking place overseas. This should be covered in a written understanding with the Soviets prior to the summit.

Messages on summit coverage from USIA's field posts suggest it is important to remember that those actually participating in summit talks are the newsmakers at any summit. The perspectives of scholars, former government officials, and other commentators provide useful background information for many overseas audiences, but they are of limited interest to those attending Worldnet and press briefings for the purpose of filing straight news reports. USIA has conducted useful post-summit evaluations of what worked and what did not. The Commission believes this practice should continue and include an assessment of the type, mix, and saturation level of briefings (by negotiators, official spokespersons, expert commentators) given to the foreign press.

In contrast to U.S. public diplomacy, the Soviets suffered from well-publicized difficulties in satisfying the media with scheduling, biographic and background information, and from their surprising indifference to the needs of journalists covering summit events. To the Soviets, a press inquiry referred elsewhere seemed to be viewed with relief as a problem solved. Any Soviet projections of a favorable image of their summit presence could not be credited to their much-noted recent attention to Western style press relations.

LESSONS FOR THE NEXT SUMMIT

There are many useful lessons from the first superpower summit in the United States in 14 years. In assessing them, it is useful to keep in mind the essential role played by public diplomacy in achieving summit goals. Instant communication requires new approaches to American foreign policy. The communication of U.S. policies must keep pace with revolutionary advances in telecommunications technology.

In the case of the Washington summit, favorable European public opinion toward the U.S. position on INF was perceived as vital to Senate ratification of the INF Treaty, since the weapons themselves were based in Western Europe. White House planners, by their actions, clearly grasped the significance of support by key foreign opinion elites for an INF accord and the importance of public diplomacy programs designed to encourage that support.

This confluence of public and private diplomatic goals may or may not prevail at future summits. If the focus of the next summit is on European-based conventional forces and chemical weapons, Western European public opinion will be at least as important as it was for an INF agreement. But if the focus is on U.S.-based strategic nuclear weapons, foreign public opinion may not be perceived to be as consequential. And if domestic political circumstances—both in the United States and abroad—do not suggest an obvious role for public diplomacy to U.S. policymakers, the challenge for USIA in its planning for the next summit will be even greater.

Other questions cloud the public diplomacy environment for the next summit. Favorable resolution of START negotiations, qualitative enhancement of NATO's conventional forces, and East-West force reductions are U.S. policy goals. The Soviets may be expected to continue with efforts to block SDI and support those opposing NATO force improvements. The positions of key European countries on these issues is uncertain. Will the Soviets continue their strategy of seeking to bend European opinion? After a dozen years of futile talks, will a fresh start on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR) yield results? What will be the impact in Europe of the Senate INF ratification debate and any reservations that may be attached to the agreement? What will be the impact of the U.S. presidential campaign?

Successful public diplomacy programs will be more difficult to carry out at a summit in Moscow. The Voice of America, USIA's Worldnet television network, the

Radio Marti program, and electronic distribution of the Wireless File have made it easier than ever to transmit authoritative and timely policy statements to foreign audiences. At the U.S.-Soviet summits in Geneva and Reykjavik and at annual economic summits, USIA has shown it can quickly "get the message out" through text, television, radio, personal contact, and other means. Conditions in the Soviet Union will make this more difficult.

USIA should move quickly to develop communications capabilities for a Moscow summit. Priority attention should be given to broadcasting statements to Soviet and Eastern European audiences by the President, the Secretary of State and other spokespersons—free of external editing—via Worldnet television and the Voice of America.

The world's press begins to arrive at a summit site as much as a week in advance. The Soviets previously have taken advantage of journalists assembled with nothing to report by bringing senior officials and spokespersons to the scene prior to the arrival of the principals to give advance briefings on their agenda. To combat this, U.S. spokespersons and senior officials similarly should arrive early and be available to explain and advocate U.S. summit objectives.

The United States also should submit an early request for an appearance by President Reagan on Soviet and Warsaw Pact television immediately prior to a Moscow summit. NBC's prime time interview by Tom Brokaw with General Secretary Gorbachev provides the basis for reciprocal access by the President to Soviet television audiences.

Reciprocity should also be the basis for U.S. insistence on extension of full professional courtesies to media representatives seeking to cover a Moscow summit. Equivalent access by journalists and official spokesmen from the Soviet Union and the West is a legitimate and increasingly important public diplomacy concern.⁵ The full cooperation and range of services provided by the U.S. government to Soviet media representatives at the Washington summit justifies insistence on corresponding press treatment and access during a Moscow summit.

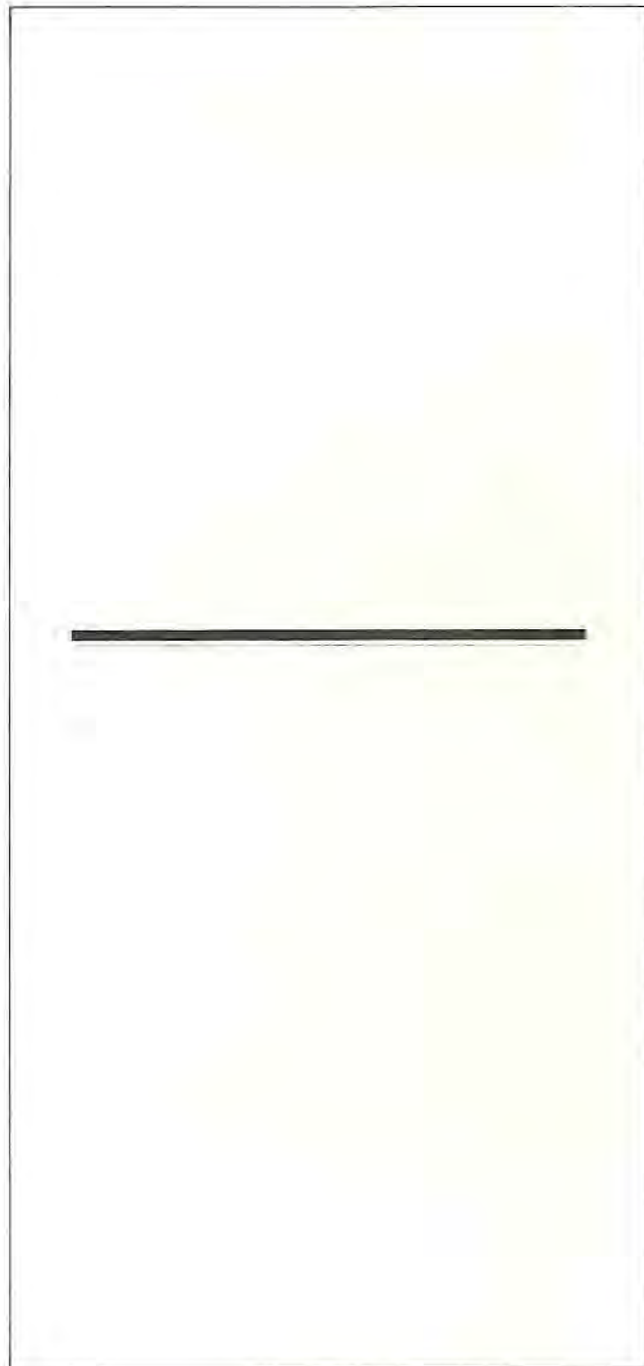
This is a particularly troublesome issue in determining participation in press pools for events where access is limited due to space considerations. Ideally, a U.S.-Soviet agreement on, and publication of, media access principles in advance of the Moscow summit would introduce the prospect of widespread public opprobrium as a deterrent to blatant efforts to deny Western press access to newsmakers. The impact of open access on the quality of reporting from any summit is obvious.

The public diplomacy task is not over with the completion of the summit. U.S. officials and other experts should participate in post-summit briefings and other public diplomacy programs overseas.

The Commission also recommends that greater attention be given to assessing the public diplomacy goals of U.S. negotiating partners prior to future summits. Strategies should be developed to counter Soviet public diplomacy initiatives that seek to exploit the media skills of General Secretary Gorbachev, not to mention his wife who proved to be a major public relations attraction for the American media.

⁵The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy addressed the imbalance in U.S. and Soviet media access in its report, "Soviet Advocacy and the U.S. Media," published in October, 1986.

In the Commission's view, the United States should also use well-planned public opinion research and program evaluations to a far greater extent in preparing for future summits. USIA's Office of Research should assess areas of strength and vulnerability in the images the superpowers project to foreign audiences. Systematic evaluation of Soviet public diplomacy in Western Europe and elsewhere should also be undertaken. Much available analysis of Soviet public diplomacy seems impressionistic and perhaps culture bound and deceptive.⁹ The U.S. should anticipate that the Soviets, who show increasing sensitivity to the influence of public attitudes on the decisions of democratic governments, will continue to play to foreign audiences in the timing and substance of their policy initiatives. The Commission is convinced the U.S. has not applied available research capabilities sufficiently to determine the extent of Soviet success in conducting its own brand of public diplomacy with foreign audiences. The United States should have as full a picture of the impact of Soviet public diplomacy programs as it does of Soviet military, economic, and diplomatic activities. The value of such research for American public diplomacy priorities and long range planning would more than justify the effort. ■

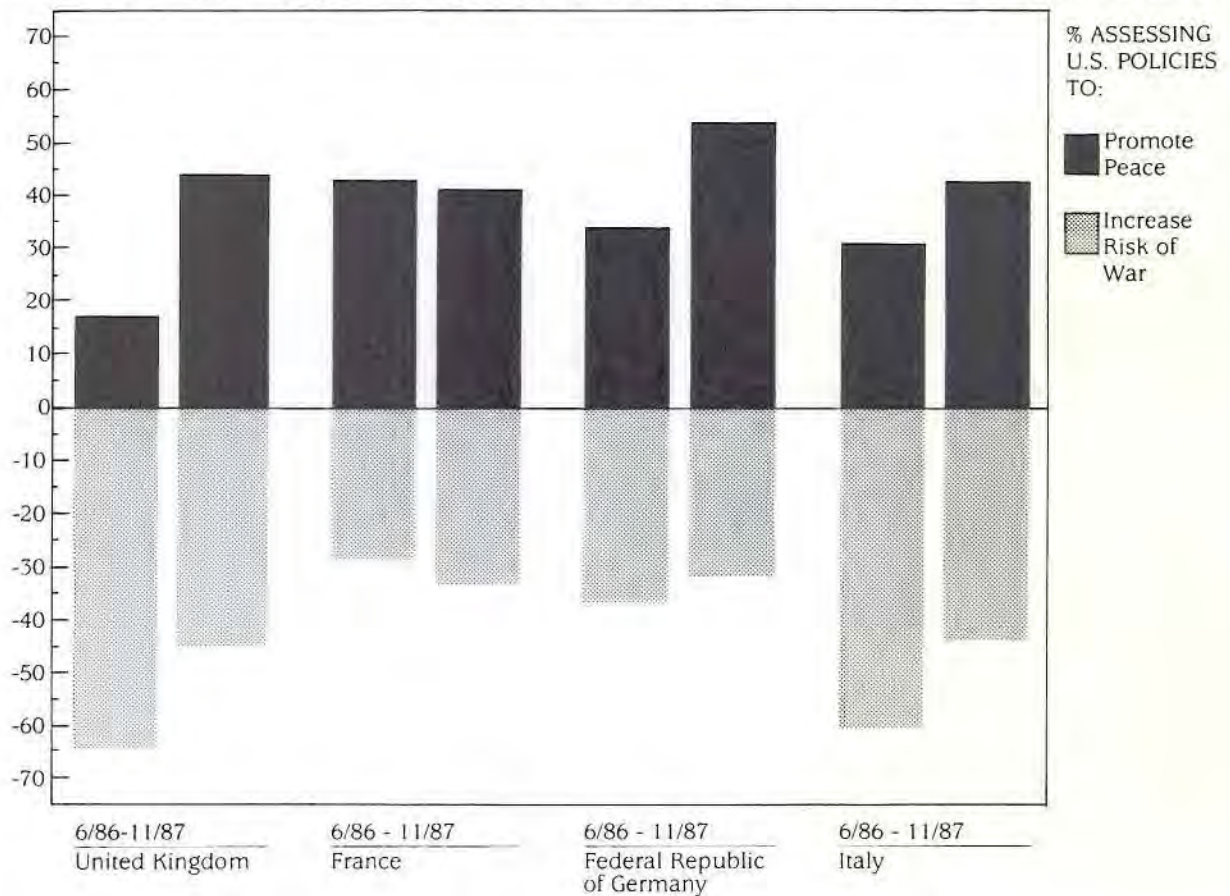


⁹For example, British journalist Simon Hoggart reported from the Washington summit: "It's a myth that these Russians are masters of public relations. Rather it's a matter of contrast. The last lot were masters of public acrimony. In any case, what Americans mean by good PR is 'foreigners who behave like Americans.'" *The Observer*, December 14, 1987.

U.S. POLICIES INCREASINGLY SEEN BY KEY WESTERN EUROPEAN AUDIENCES TO PROMOTE PEACE

QUESTION:

"On balance, do you think that U.S. policies and actions during the past year have done more to promote peace or done more to increase the risk of war?"

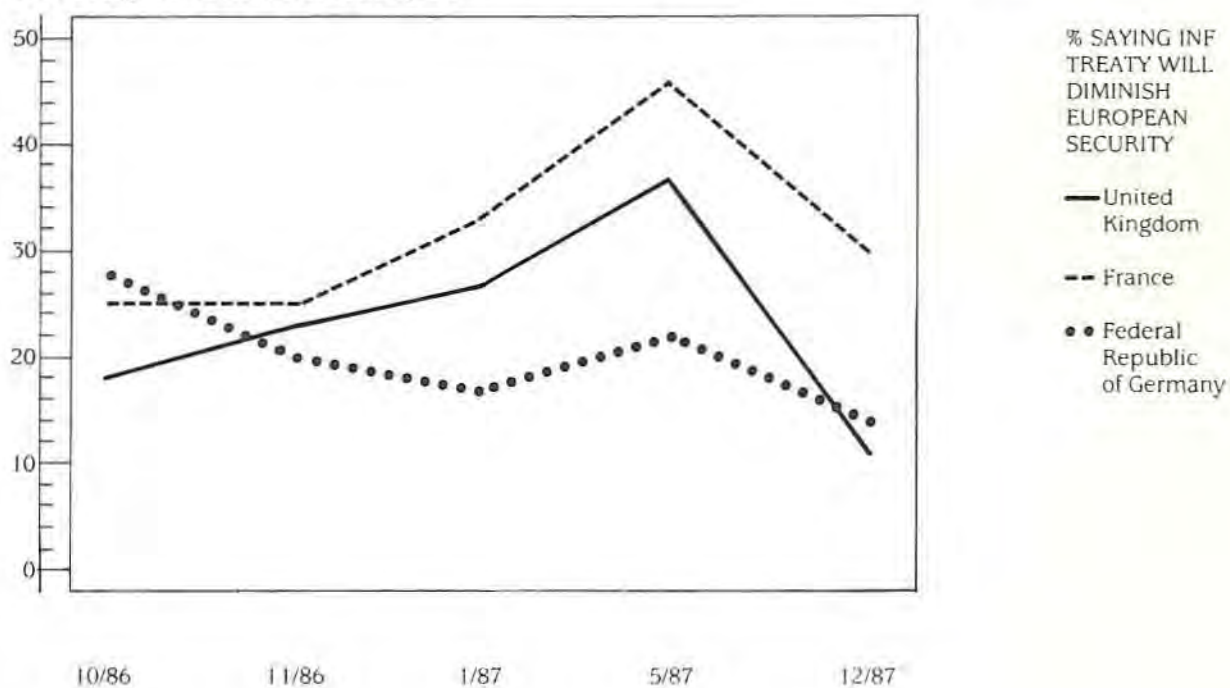


Source: USIA Office of Research

SKEPTICISM ABOUT INF TREATY WANES; WESTERN EUROPEANS REASSURED ZERO-ZERO ACCORD WILL NOT UNDERMINE SECURITY

QUESTION:

"Do you think the U.S.- Soviet agreement to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe will enhance, diminish, or have no effect on the security of Western Europe?"



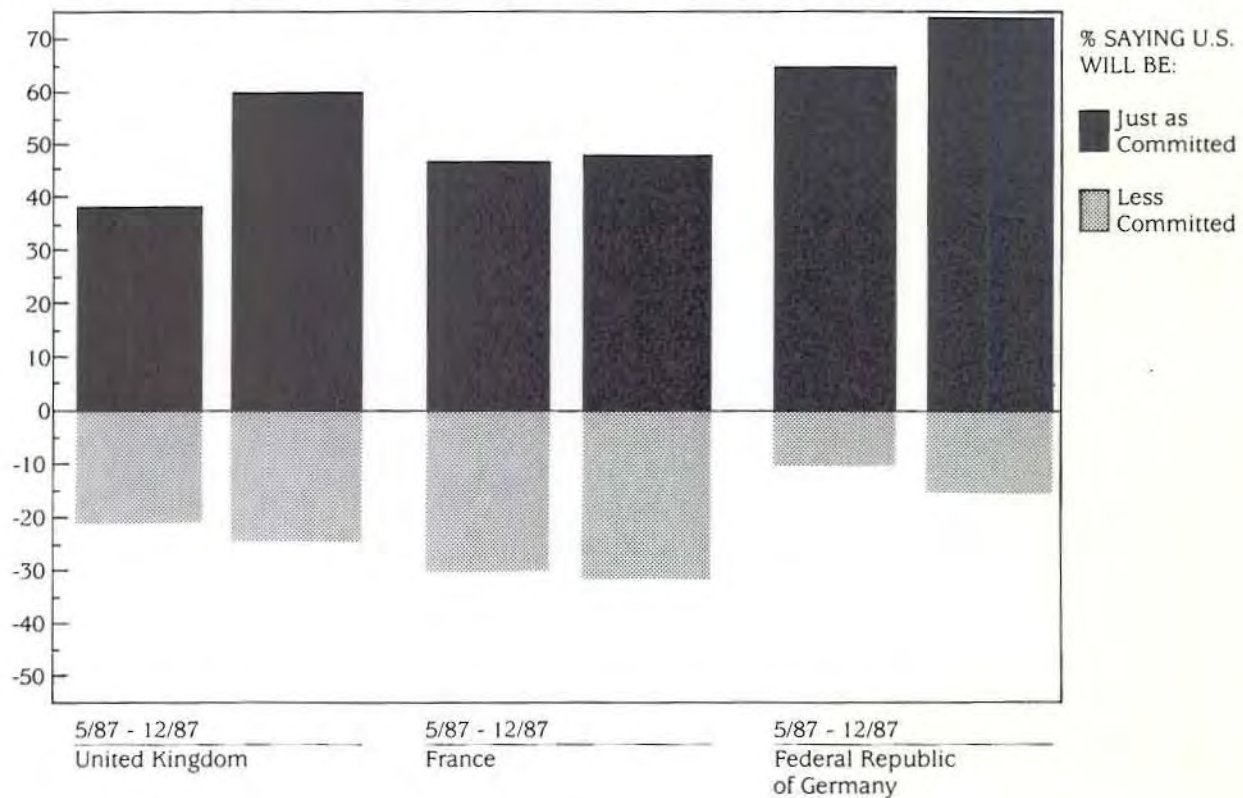
Source: USIA Office of Research

CHART 34

"DECOUPLING" ARGUMENT FALLS FLAT; U.S. PERCEIVED TO BE JUST AS COMMITTED TO THE DEFENSE OF WESTERN EUROPE

QUESTION:

"Some people say that the elimination of U.S. intermediate-range nuclear missiles now in Europe will mean that the U.S. is less committed to the defense of Western Europe. Others say that the U.S. will be just as committed to the defense of Western Europe. Which view is closer to your own?"



Source: USIA Office of Research

**ABOUT THE
U.S. ADVISORY
COMMISSION
ON PUBLIC
DIPLOMACY**

The Commission is an independent, bipartisan body established by Congress to oversee the international information and educational exchange programs of the United States government.

The Commission's recommendations affect significant policies and programs of the U.S. Information Agency, including the Voice of America, international educational exchanges, the Worldnet television service, the Radio Marti program, and overseas press and cultural activities.

Commission members are appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Commission submits reports to the President, the Congress, the Secretary of State, the Director of USIA, and to the American people.

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